

From: donotreply@mt.gov
To: [LEG Cmte-EQCcomment](#)
Subject: Public Comment for EQC
Date: Tuesday, July 20, 2021 8:07:35 AM

July 20, 2021

Exhibit 14

Public Comments for the Environmental Quality Council

Date: 20th July 2021 08:07

First Name:

KC

Last Name:

York

Email Address:

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Subject:

Water, fire, wildlife, climate change

Comment:

Dear EQC Committee members and relevant departments, As you know, Montana has been declared a state of emergency for drought. Temperatures are up, water is down, fires are upon us, air quality is hazardous, and the worst is still predicted to come. A critical natural ally is the beaver. They are a keystone species and nature's hydro-engineers. Beaver need and deserve respect. Beavers are integrally woven into our water resources, pollution, soil composition and retention, water temperature, wildlife habitat, fisheries, big game browse, ranching, farming, tourism, firefighting and climate change. Studies found that even during drought, where beaver were present, there was 60 percent more open water than those same areas during previous drought periods when beaver were absent. Beaver have earned the distinction, central to all life. Beavers create wetlands in which an estimated 85% of all wildlife are dependent. Sadly, only 2% of the land out west are wetlands. The beaver's impact on water reservoirs is unlike any others. "Instead of (water) racing downstream and flooding, it's slowed down and stored and you have all these areas of savings accounts being filled up. And those "savings" influence more than just surface water, as they can percolate through soil to become groundwater and recharge aquifers." This is of up most importance in our arid west for creating and maintaining wetlands, for wildlife, agriculture, drinking water, global warming and reducing fires. It is scientifically and morally irresponsible that beaver can be trapped and killed for recreational purposes in unlimited and unreported numbers in our state for 5 1/2 - 9 months out of the year and with most of the state being the latter. A damage control trapping permit can be obtained within just days outside the lengthy trapping season. This despite, non-lethal measures are shown effective and long lasting in mitigating conflict. From roughly 1/3 of trappers voluntarily reporting, almost 20,000 beaver were trapped and killed in Montana in 3 recent years. This unregulated trapping of beaver is reprehensible and we urge you to make protecting beaver a priority. Resources and references are available upon

request. Visit: <https://trapfreemt.org/wildlife-species/beaver> Thank you. KC York

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